

Practitioner's Docket No. 604.30-US1

CHAPTER II

Preliminary Classification:

Proposed Class:

Subclass:

TRANSMITTAL LETTER
TO THE UNITED STATES ELECTED OFFICE (EO/US)

(ENTRY INTO U.S. NATIONAL PHASE UNDER CHAPTER II)

PCT/US00/07915	24 March 2000 (24.03.01)	None
International Application Number	International Filing Date	International Earliest Priority Date

TITLE OF INVENTION: INTERACTIVE COMMERCIALS AS INTERFACE TO A SEARCH ENGINE

APPLICANT(S): MINDARROW SYSTEMS, INC.; BLAKELEY, Thomas; and MCEWAN, Richard

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Assistant Commissioner for Patents
Washington D.C. 20231

CERTIFICATION UNDER 37 C.F.R. SECTION 1.10*

(Express Mail label number is **mandatory**.)(Express Mail certification is *optional*.)

I hereby certify that this paper, along with any document referred to, is being deposited with the United States Postal Service on this date May 21, 2001, in an envelope as "Express Mail Post Office to Addressee," mailing Label Number BL717614801US, addressed to the: Assistant Commissioner for Patents, Washington, D.C. 20231.


Kristin J. Azcona

WARNING: Certificate of mailing (first class) or facsimile transmission procedures of 37 C.F.R. Section 1.8 cannot be used to obtain a date of mailing or transmission for this correspondence.

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"Since the filing of correspondence under [Section] 1.10 without the Express Mail mailing label thereon is an oversight that can be avoided by the exercise of reasonable care, requests for waiver of this requirement will **not** be granted on petition." Notice of Oct. 24, 1996, 60 Fed. Reg. 56,439, at 56,442.

ATTENTION: EO/US

1. Applicant herewith submits to the United States Elected Office (EO/US) the following items under 35 U.S.C. Section 371:

- a. This express request to immediately begin national examination procedures (35 U.S.C. Section 371(f)).
- b. The U.S. National Fee (35 U.S.C. Section 371(c)(1)) and other fees (37 C.F.R. Section 1.492) as indicated below:

2. Fees

CLAIMS FEE*	(1) FOR	(2) NUMBER FILED	(3) NUMBER EXTRA	(4) RATE	(5) CALCULATIONS
	TOTAL CLAIMS	15 -20 =	0	x \$18.00 =	\$0.00
	INDEPENDENT CLAIMS	2 -3 =	0	x \$80.00 =	\$0.00
	MULTIPLE DEPENDENT CLAIM(S) (if applicable) + \$270.00				\$0.00
BASIC FEE	U.S. PTO WAS INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION AUTHORITY Where an International preliminary examination fee as set forth in Section 1.482 has been paid on the international application to the U.S. PTO: and the international preliminary examination report states that the criteria of novelty, inventive step (non-obviousness) and industrial activity, as defined in PCT Article 33(2) to (4) have been satisfied for all the claims presented in the application entering the national stage (37 C.F.R. Section 1.492(a)(4)) \$100.00				\$100.00
	Total of above Calculations				= \$100.00
SMALL ENTITY	Reduction by 1/2 for filing by small entity, if applicable. Affidavit must be filed. (note 37 CFR Sections 1.9, 1.27, 1.28)				- \$50.00
	Subtotal				\$50.00
	Total National Fee				\$50.00
	Fee for recording the enclosed assignment document \$40.00 (37 C.F.R. Section 1.21(h)). See attached "ASSIGNMENT COVER SHEET".				\$40.00
TOTAL	Total Fees enclosed				\$90.00

*See attached Preliminary Amendment Reducing the Number of Claims.

JC18 Ref'd PCT/PTO 2 2 MAY 2001

A check in the amount of \$90.00 to cover the above fees is enclosed.

3. A copy of the International application as filed (35 U.S.C. Section 371(c)(2)) is not required, as the application was filed with the United States Receiving Office.
4. A translation of the International application into the English language (35 U.S.C. Section 371(c)(2)) is not required as the application was filed in English.
5. Amendments to the claims of the International application under PCT Article 19 (35 U.S.C. Section 371(c)(3)) are transmitted herewith.
6. A translation of the amendments to the claims under PCT Article 19 (38 U.S.C. Section 371(c)(3)) is not required as the amendments were made in the English language.
7. A copy of the international examination report (PCT/IPEA/409) is not required as the application was filed with the United States Receiving Office.
8. Annex(es) to the international preliminary examination report is/are not required as the application was filed with the United States Receiving Office.
9. A translation of the annexes to the international preliminary examination report is not required as the annexes are in the English language.
10. An oath or declaration of the inventor (35 U.S.C. Section 371(c)(4)) complying with 35 U.S.C. Section 115 is submitted herewith, and such oath or declaration is attached to the application.
- II. Other document(s) or information included:
 11. An International Search Report (PCT/ISA/210) or Declaration under PCT Article 17(2)(a) is not required, as the application was searched by the United States International Searching Authority.
 12. An Information Disclosure Statement under 37 C.F.R. Sections 1.97 and 1.98 will be transmitted within THREE MONTHS of the date of submission of requirements under 35 U.S.C. Section 371(c).
 13. An assignment document is transmitted herewith for recording.
 14. Additional documents:
 - a. Copy of request (PCT/RO/101)
15. The above items are being transmitted before 30 months from any claimed priority date.

AUTHORIZATION TO CHARGE ADDITIONAL FEES

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge the following additional fees that may be required by this paper and during the entire pendency of this application to Account No.: 500341

37 C.F.R. Section 1.492(a)(1), (2), (3), and (4) (filing fees)

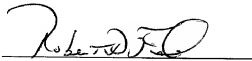
37 C.F.R. Section 1.492(b), (c), and (d) (presentation of extra claims)

37 C.F.R. Section 1.17 (application processing fees)

37 C.F.R. Section 1.17(a)(1)-(5) (extension fees pursuant to Section 1.136(a))

37 C.F.R. Section 1.492(e) and (f) (surcharge fees for filing the declaration and/or filing an English translation of an International Application later than 20 months after the priority date).

Date: May 21, 2001



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INTERACTIVE COMMERCIALS AS INTERFACE TO A SEARCH ENGINE

Field of The Invention

The field of the invention is electronic direct marketing.

5 Background of The Invention

Expansion of the Internet over the last few years has made enormous amounts of information available to users all over the world. While in many respects this has been a major step forward, difficulties in searching all that information have still not been resolved, and to some extent further expansion of the Internet only exacerbates the problem.

- 10 It is likely that most Internet searching is still performed using simplistic keyword type search engines such as Yahoo!™. There are other, second generation search engines such as Northern Light™ that try to categorize the information in ways that increase accessibility, but even these search engines are often very unsatisfactory. Among other things, they do nothing to guide individuals who may be loading data onto the Internet to categorize and store the
- 15 information in a consistent manner. US 6035294 to Fish (March 2000) discloses technology for a third generation search engine that appears to resolve many of these problems, and over the next several years promises to greatly improve searching on the Internet.

- Although a very significant advancement in the art, even the Fish engine contemplates that users will access the searching functions through specialized interfaces on web sites
- 20 designed for that purpose. Among other things, there appears to be no appreciation that searches could be instigated from within an e-mail (client) application.

Thus, there is a need to provide methods and systems by which a user can submit search requests to an Internet or other network search engine from within an e-mail client.

Summary of the Invention

The present invention provides embodiments in which a user submits a search request to an Internet or other network search engine from within an e-mail client.

In preferred embodiments, the software for performing this task is provided as part of an e-mail advertisement sent to the user (recipient). The advertisement preferably includes a first portion having a first branding graphic, and a second portion that receives a search string designated by the recipient. In especially preferred embodiments the search engine returns the search results to the recipient within the e-mail client.

Various objects, features, aspects, and advantages of the present invention will become more apparent from the following detailed description of preferred embodiments of the invention, along with the accompanying drawings in which like numerals represent like components.

Brief Description of the Drawing

Fig. 1 is a schematic of an e-mail message according to the claimed subject matter.

Fig. 2 is a schematic of a search results portion of an e-mail message.

Fig. 3 is a flowchart of a preferred method.

Detailed Description

In Figure 1 an e-mail message 1 generally contains a header portion 10, a message portion 12, and an attachment portion 14 including an attachment 15. One or both of the message portion 12 and attachment 15 include a product or advertiser name section 20, value proposition 30, a hyperlink portion 40, a search string input section 50, a search initiator button 55. Figure 2 generally depicts a search results section 60 that can be included in either message 1 or another e-mail message.

The header portion 10 is likely known in the art. There is at least a "To:" section 9, a "From:" section 11, and a "Re:" section 13, the content of which is likely controlled by the

sender of the e-mail 1, and the format of which is likely controlled by the recipient's e-mail client. By way of illustration, typical e-mail clients are Eudora™ and Microsoft™ Outlook™.

The product of advertiser name section 20 preferably introduces the product(s) and/or service(s) being offered. In this instance the advertisement is directed to a new service called BigFatFish.com, which offers a third generation search engine such as that disclosed in US 6035294. Other contemplated products or services include anything that can be offered, including consumer goods (toothpaste, pets, building supplies, automobiles, etc), financial and insurance services, vacations, theatre tickets, and so on. It is especially contemplated that more than one type of goods or services can be offered, providing cross branding to the advertisers.

The value proposition section 30 provides the recipient with information on the advertised items. Presumably the advertiser will include a catchy image or slogan, or perhaps a list of features and benefits. There may be a price listed, as well as some sort of discount or other incentive to act within a particular time frame.

The hyperlink portion 40 provides a link to a web page, perhaps of an advertiser, or a selling agent, or perhaps a company that transmitted the e-mail message. There may be many such hyperlinks, and they need not have any conceptual connection with anything else included in the e-mail 1.

The search string input section 50 and search initiator button 55 cooperate to receive an input search string from the e-mail recipient, and initiate a search on a search engine. The search string may be structured in some manner, but more preferably is of the free-form variety. Thus, a viable search string entered by a recipient may be "red mercedes", which would likely initiate a search for Mercedes™ cars that are red. Significantly, it is not essential that the e-mail client be HTTP compliant, or have any other access to the network, special or otherwise. One option, for example, is that the e-mail client will send an e-mail request to a server that does access to the network, the server would submit the search and obtain the results, and then send the results to the recipient in another e-mail. More

preferably, however, the e-mail client would act as a browser, and would itself submit the search, retrieve the results, and display the results to the searcher/recipient. Such displaying of results is preferably accomplished by sending the recipient another e-mail that includes the search results, although it is contemplated that e-mail clients could be written so that delivered and/or opened e-mail could be updated on the fly by the sender of the e-mail, or by another entity.

The search engine to which the search string is submitted is not limited to anything in particular. Thus, it is contemplated that the search would be submitted to a search engine available through another portal, such as a web page of the Internet. This is true of the BigFatFish™ type search engine. It is, however, also contemplated that the search engine would be available only through the search string input section 50.

In various aspects of preferred embodiments, it is contemplated that the search string being used is presented to the recipient in the e-mail 1. For example, some of the bullet points in value proposition 30 may contain keywords that are submitted through the search string input section 50 when clicked upon. In other instances there may be another section (not shown) that lists keywords of interest. Thus, it is contemplated that the search string can be designated by the user in any suitable manner, including entering the search string in an entry box, or selecting the search string from a list of terms.

The search results section 60 preferably includes a title 62, a search results table 64, a navigation aids 66, and a new search button 68. The search results table 60 preferably displays in tabular form 64 a set of search results returned in response to the search. Tables are excellent means of displaying information, especially where the different rows each contains information on a different item identified by the search. It is contemplated, for example, that search results of non-tabular oriented search engines such as Yahoo!™ can be reformatted into a tabular format for presentation in search results section 60. In a system such as BigFatFish™, the cells of the search results table can themselves be active hyperlinks. Thus, such cells can link to pictures or other images, videos, or an audio clip that motivates the recipient to order a product from among a listing of products contained in the table. Such information can be played using a player that is intrinsic or extrinsic to the e-mail 1. Also in a

system such as BigFatFish™, the product offerings or other items displayed in the different rows may or may not be related to one another by manufacturer, vendor, distributor, etc.

In **Figure 2**, a search results section 60 generally includes a banner or title portion 62, a data portion 64 and navigation aids 66. The data depicted here is shown in table format, but is contemplated to be presented in any format whatsoever, including memo type text fields, audio, video, picture, or any other objects. The title and navigation portions 62 and 66 are entirely optional. It is contemplated that the results section 60 may include other sections (not shown) as well, including additional branding graphics, hyperlinks, new search buttons, etc.

In **Figure 3**, a preferred method 100 comprises: sending an interactive electronic commercial to a recipient as an attachment to an e-mail by providing the commercial with a commercial message portion that includes a first branding graphic 110; the recipient opening the attachment 120; the opened attachment displaying an interface portion that receives a search string designated by the recipient 130; an e-mail client submitting the search string to a search engine 140; and returning a set of results from submission of the search string to the recipient from within the e-mail client 150.

Thus, specific embodiments and applications of interactive electronic commercials have been disclosed in which a user submits a search request to an Internet or other network search engine from within an e-mail client. It should be apparent, however, to those skilled in the art that many more modifications besides those already described are possible without departing from the inventive concepts herein. The inventive subject matter, therefore, is not to be restricted except in the spirit of the appended claims. Moreover, in interpreting both the specification and the claims, all terms should be interpreted in the broadest possible manner consistent with the context. In particular, the terms “comprises” and “comprising” should be interpreted as referring to elements, components, or steps in a non-exclusive manner, indicating that the referenced elements, components, or steps may be present, or utilized, or combined with other elements, components, or steps that are not expressly referenced.

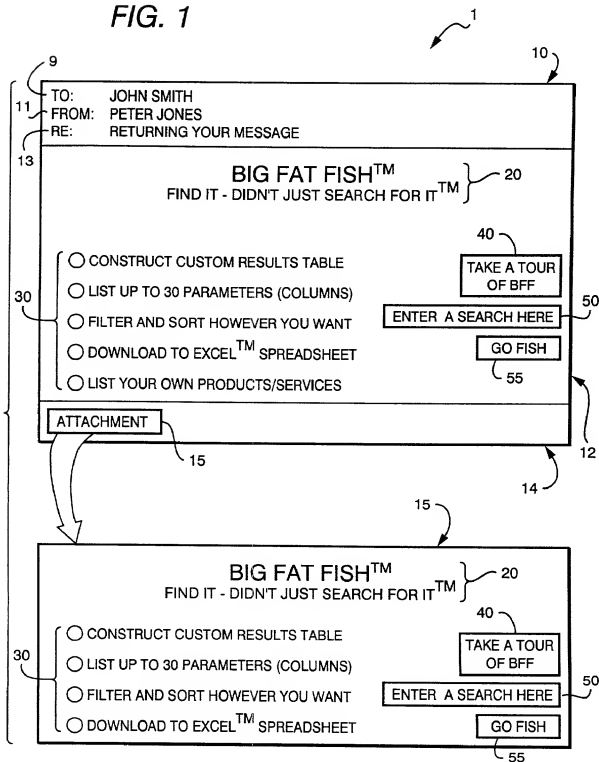
CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. An interactive electronic commercial sent to a recipient as an attachment to an e-mail, comprising:
a commercial message portion that includes a first branding graphic;
an interface portion that receives a search string designated by the recipient; and
a searching routine that submits the search string to a search engine, and returns results to the recipient from within an e-mail client, without using a browser.
2. The commercial of claim 1 wherein the search string is selected from a list of search strings presented to the recipient in the commercial.
3. The commercial of claim 1 wherein the interface portion contains a space into which the recipient types the search string.
4. The commercial of claim 1 wherein the search engine is a commercial searching facility available through a portal other than the commercial.
5. The commercial of claim 1 wherein the search engine is a commercial searching facility available through a web page of the Internet.
6. The commercial of claim 1 wherein the search engine further comprises a graphical hyperlink to the web site.
7. The commercial of claim 1 further comprising an ordering routine through which the recipient orders a product.
8. The commercial of claim 1 further comprising a results routine that returns a set of results to the recipient through an interface provided by the commercial based upon submitting the search string to the search engine.
9. The commercial of claim 8 further comprising an ordering routine through which the recipient orders a product from among a listing of products contained in the set of results.

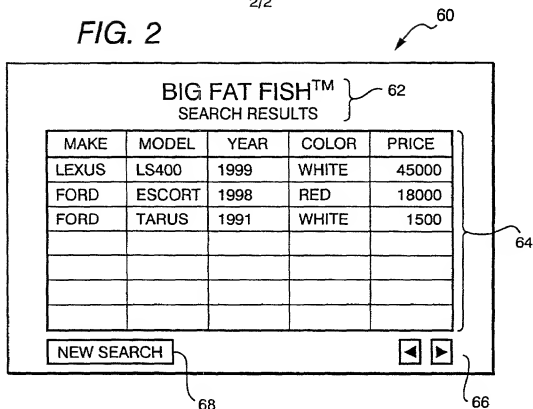
10. The commercial of claim 8 further comprising an audio containing clip that motivates the recipient to order a product from among a listing of products contained in the set of results.
11. The commercial of claim 10 having a playing routine by which the audio containing clip is played at will by the recipient.
12. The commercial of claim 1 where the commercial further includes branding graphics for multiple products.
13. The commercial of claim 1 where the commercial includes additional branding graphics for multiple products from unrelated vendors.
14. The commercial of claim 1 where the information ordering routine takes order information for multiple products from unrelated vendors.
15. A method of sending an interactive electronic commercial to a recipient as an attachment to an e-mail, comprising:
 providing the commercial with a commercial message portion that includes a first branding graphic;
 the recipient opening the attachment;
 the opened attachment displaying an interface portion that receives a search string designated by the recipient;
 an e-mail client submitting the search string to a search engine; and
 returning a set of results from submission of the search string to the recipient from within the e-mail client, without using a browser.

FIG. 1



2/2

FIG. 2



100

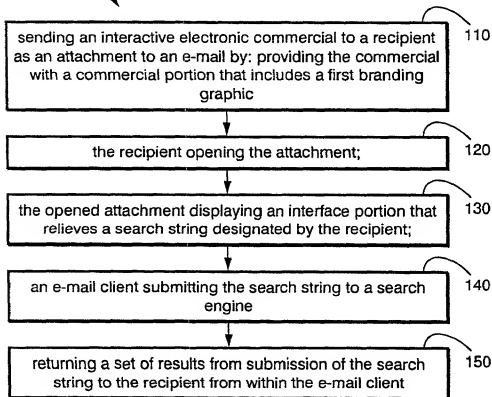


FIG. 3

COMBINED DECLARATION AND POWER OF ATTORNEY

**(ORIGINAL, DESIGN, NATIONAL STAGE OF PCT, SUPPLEMENTAL, DIVISIONAL,
CONTINUATION, OR C-I-P)**

As a below named inventor, I hereby declare that:

TYPE OF DECLARATION

This declaration is for a national stage of PCT application.

INVENTORSHIP IDENTIFICATION

My residence, post office address and citizenship are as stated below, next to my name. I believe that I am an original, first and joint inventor of the subject matter that is claimed, and for which a patent is sought on the invention entitled:

TITLE OF INVENTION

INTERACTIVE COMMERCIALS AS INTERFACE TO A SEARCH ENGINE

SPECIFICATION IDENTIFICATION

The specification was described and claimed in PCT International Application No. PCT/US00/07915 filed on March 24, 2000.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF REVIEW OF PAPERS AND DUTY OF CANDOR

I hereby state that I have reviewed and understand the contents of the above-identified specification, including the claims, as amended by any amendment referred to above.

I acknowledge the duty to disclose information, which is material to patentability as defined in 37, Code of Federal Regulations, Section 1.56, and which is material to the examination of this application, namely, information where there is a substantial likelihood that a reasonable Examiner would consider it important in deciding whether to allow the application to issue as a patent.

PRIORITY CLAIM (35 U.S.C. Section 119(a)-(d))

I hereby claim foreign priority benefits under Title 35, United States Code, Section 119(a)-(d) of any foreign application(s) for patent or inventor's certificate or of any PCT international application(s) designating at least one country other than the United States of America listed below and have also

identified below any foreign application(s) for patent or inventor's certificate or any PCT international application(s) designating at least one country other than the United States of America filed by me on the same subject matter having a filing date before that of the application(s) of which priority is claimed.

Such applications have been filed as follows.

**PRIOR PCT APPLICATION(S) FILED WITHIN 12 MONTHS
(6 MONTHS FOR DESIGN) PRIOR TO THIS APPLICATION
AND ANY PRIORITY CLAIMS UNDER 35 U.S.C. SECTION 119(a)-(d)**

INDICATE IF PCT	APPLICATION NUMBER	DATE OF FILING DAY, MONTH, YEAR	PRIORITY CLAIMED UNDER 35 U.S.C. SECTION 119
PCT	PCT/US00/07915	24 March 2000	Yes

POWER OF ATTORNEY

I hereby appoint the following practitioner(s) to prosecute this application and transact all business in the Patent and Trademark Office connected therewith.

APPOINTED PRACTITIONER(S)

REGISTRATION NUMBER(S)

Robert D. Fish

33880

David J. Zoetewey

46258

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Martin Fessenmaier

46697

I hereby appoint the practitioner(s) associated with the Customer Number provided below to prosecute this application and to transact all business in the Patent and Trademark Office connected therewith.

SEND CORRESPONDENCE TO

DIRECT TELEPHONE CALLS TO:

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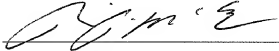
Robert D. Fish
(714) 449-2337


Customer Number 24392

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code, and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issued thereon.

SIGNATURE(S)

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